



NEWS RELEASE

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Contact: Rowlanda Cawthon, Public Information Officer (360) 725-8804

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DOC Narrows Site Selection Search for Prison Reception Center

OLYMPIA – The Department of Corrections has narrowed its site selection search to the three most suitable sites for a reception center.

The locations that will move forward in the process are located in Mason County, Kitsap County and Thurston County. These sites are identified on the [prison siting](#) website as Mason County 1, Bremerton, and Thurston County. These sites were selected based on a range of physical, environmental, engineering and community characteristics. A total of 11 submittals recommending 15 properties were received with some parties proposing multiple properties.

“We’ve taken the site selection process very seriously because we want to ensure the best site is selected for the prison reception center,” said Secretary Eldon Vail.

DOC conducted initial screenings and site visits for all of the properties based on the siting criteria to determine if the communities met the minimum requirements. Sites went through a rigorous site review to determine which three sites should be analyzed in an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) assessment.

An EIS is a document that provides positive and negative environmental effects of a proposed project. The EIS will compare data and perform an impact evaluation under the state of Washington environmental requirements. A cost analysis will also be part of the review.

“Siting a prison in any community will generate questions and concerns,” said Prison Director Bernie Warner. “We realize the value of keeping the citizens of the chosen communities involved in the selection process and we will make every effort to ensure this happens.”

The Department anticipates having a preferred site identified by December. While the Legislature approved funds to find a location and pay for pre-design costs, they have not yet approved the funds necessary to build a new prison reception center.

A reception center is the first place offenders go after being sentenced to a state prison. During the reception process offenders are assessed for physical and mental health, security and management needs, and other needs such as education and chemical dependency.